

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended) An upper body side protection device for an occupant of a vehicle which is equipped with a vehicle seat including a seat surface and a back rest,
said protection device comprising a side gas bag extending to the side of said upper body, said side gas bag having a ring-shaped inflatable chamber which extends from said seat surface at the side of said upper body to at least close to an upper edge of said back rest and surrounds a central region of said gas bag, said central region in an inflated state of said gas bag having a smaller thickness than said inflatable chamber, measured horizontally and transversely to a longitudinal direction of the vehicle, wherein said inflatable chamber is closed peripherally to form a ring shape.

Claim 2 (Original) The upper body side protection device according to claim 1, wherein said central region is constructed so as to be non-inflatable.

Claim 3 (Canceled)

Claim 4 (Original) The upper body side protection device according to claim 1, wherein said inflatable chamber is oval in said inflated state, and a main direction of extent thereof is substantially parallel to said back rest.

Claim 5 (Original) The upper body side protection device according to claim 1, wherein said gas bag when installed and inflated, as seen in a side view, has upper and lower sections which are wider than lateral sections connecting said upper and lower sections.

Claim 6 (Original) The upper body side protection device according to claim 1, wherein said gas bag when installed and inflated, as seen in a side view, extends across a width of a maximum of approximately 300 mm parallel to said back rest from said seat surface upwards with respect to said back rest.

Claim 7 (Original) The upper body side protection device according to claim 1, wherein said central region begins above approximately 200 mm over said seat surface, in relation to said inflated state of said side gas bag, and extends to a maximum up to approximately 150 mm beneath said upper edge of said back rest.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented) A vehicle seat comprising an upper body side protection device for an occupant of a vehicle which is equipped with a vehicle seat including a seat surface and a back rest, said protection device comprising a side gas

bag extending to the side of said upper body, said side gas bag having a ring-shaped inflatable chamber which extends from said seat surface at the side of said upper body to at least close to an upper edge of said back rest and surrounds a central region of said gas bag, said central region in an inflated state of said gas bag having a smaller thickness than said inflatable chamber, measured horizontally and transversely to a longitudinal direction of the vehicle, said protection device being integrated in said back rest, wherein said inflatable chamber is closed peripherally to form a ring shape, said inflatable chamber being oval in said inflated state, a main direction of extent of said chamber being substantially parallel to said back rest.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented) An upper body side protection device for an occupant of a vehicle which is equipped with a vehicle seat including a seat surface and a back rest,

said protection device comprising a side gas bag extending to the side of said upper body,

said side gas bag having a ring-shaped inflatable chamber which extends from said seat surface at the side of said upper body to at least close to an upper edge of said back rest and surrounds a central region of said gas bag,

said central region in an inflated state of said gas bag having a smaller thickness than said inflatable chamber, measured horizontally and transversely to a longitudinal direction of the vehicle

wherein said inflatable chamber is closed peripherally to form a ring shape,

said inflatable chamber being oval in said inflated state, a main direction of extent of said chamber being substantially parallel to said back rest.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented) The upper body side protection device according to claim 9, wherein said upper body has a plurality of ribs, said central region covering said ribs.